

SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes

of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held at the Council Offices, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth at 8.00 pm on **Monday 09 March 2015**.

Those present

Cllr Angela Alder
Cllr Eric Buckmaster
Cllr Barry Hodges

Cllr Peter Mitchell
Cllr Tom Reeks

In attendance:

R Bowran - Town Clerk

Mrs J Kenny – Town Projects Manager

F 14/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received from Cllr Andrew Wincott – business commitment; and from Cllr Derek Filler.

F 14/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Declarations of Interest by Members. There were none

F 14/27 MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 08 December 2014 (F03) [prop Cllr Alder; secd Cllr Hodges]

F 14/28 STAFF MATTERS

To consider any matters relating to members of staff.
Clerk reported that:

1. Gill Abbott has been given a “Fitnote” through to July 2015. Her role has been shared out between other members of staff.
2. Terry Wilson has completed his probationary period and having proved to be satisfactory had his contract confirmed.
3. Tracey Dobinson is due to have a knee replacement operation and will be unfit to drive. Terry Wilson will cover for Sawbobus during her absence.
4. No decision has yet been made about summer student cover to help the groundsman.

F 14/29 FINANCE MATTERS

To consider any matters relating to the financial arrangements of the Council.

1. Clerk reported on the interim report of the Internal Auditor who had requested and been provided with copies of the external audit report for 2013/14; the council’s constitution; the budget for 2015/16; the report of the last internal audit to the F&P committee; a copy of the resolutions putting the recommendations into effect and a copy of the risk assessment for 2014/15. The following points were noted:
 - a. Financial Regulations and Standing Orders had been updated in line with the IA’s recommendations.

- b. Several housekeeping matters relating to the Edge finance system
 - c. The need for detailed variance reports to be presented to the F&P committee on a quarterly basis.
 - d. Recommendation that the council should move to the financial system provided by Rialtas.
 - e. Recommendation that the council's General Reserve should be higher. A figure in the range of 25% to 100% of gross expenditure (i.e. £97k to £390k) was suggested.
2. Clerk reported the new scale of charges for the "Dial-a-Ride" service that was a realistic contribution to the costs of running the service.

F 14/30 POLICY MATTERS

To consider any matters relating to Policy for the future development of Town Council services to the community.

1. Local Council Award Scheme. The new scheme, replacing the Quality Council Awards, was discussed. The clerk will attend a briefing session on 11 March by NALC. Copies of the scheme to be sent to all members of the new council when elected.
2. Bell Street Conveniences. A proposal has been received from the Waste Services manager of EHDC. This varies significantly from the ethos of the proposals put to the EHDC by the town council. The subject to be discussed at council on 30 March.
3. Town Green Development. No further progress although consent has been granted to initiate a topographical survey and a detailed tree survey as a precursor to a further discussion with the EHDC landscape architect.
4. Farmers Market. Town clerk reported on the recent markets and the way forward was discussed. The subject to be discussed and a strategy agreed at council on 30 March.
5. Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. Clerk reported instances of unacceptable behaviour by a member of the public towards Councillors, members of council staff and retailers in the town. Issue to be discussed and remedies agreed at council on 30 March.
6. Broadband and Mark Prisk MP. Mark Prisk has contacted the council asking for our support for an open event in the summer to advise people of the availability of Broadband funding for rural areas. Members agreed to support the initiative.